

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-03

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 13446 ACTION INFO BOMBAY
MADRAS SECSTATE DATE 10/8/74.

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TGS: PINT, PINS, IN

SUBJ: BIHAR: SOME PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

1. SUMMARY. WHAT FOLLOWS IS STRICTLY IN THE NATURE OF
PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION/COMMENT ON THE JUST-ENDED OCTOBER 3-6
CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR AND THE JAYA
PRAKASH NARAYAN-LED PROTEST MOVEMENT. THE ONLY OVER-ALL
COMMENT WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IS THAT J.P. SEEMS TO HAVE
SUCCEEDED IN REASSERTING IN BIHAR THE IMPORTANCE, BECAUSE OF
ITS PUBLIC CREDIBILITY AND THE SUPPORT THAT FLOWS THEREFROM,
OF A NON-CONGRESS, NON-LEFTIST THIRD FORCE. THE THIRD FORCE,
FOCUSSED AROUND NARAYAN HIMSELF, BORROWS HEAVILY FROM THE
PRE-INDEPENDENCE GANDHIAN AND CONGRESS PARTY POLITICAL STYLE
INVOKING MASS POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND PEACEFUL SATYAGRAHA
METHODS ALONG WITH POST-INDEPENDENCE OPPOSITION PARTY (IN
THIS CASE THE JAN SANGH, SOCIALIST PARTY, CPI(M) TECHNIQUES
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INCLUDING LIMITED VIOLENCE, SABOTAGE, PROMOTION OF TEMPORARY

ANARCHY. IT WOULD BE VERY SURPRISING IF MATTERS REST WHERE THEY CONCLUDED OCT. 6. END SUMMARY.

2. CONTRARY TO WHAT THE BIHAR GOVERNMENTAL ESTABLISHMENT BELIEVED WOULD OCCUR (OR AT ANY RATE, CONTRARY TO WHAT THEY TOLD US THEY BELIEVED, CALCUTTA 1995), THE OCT. 3-6 NARAYAN-LED BIHAR BANDH WAS LARGELY SUCCESSFUL. SUCCESSFUL IN THE SENSE THAT IT SHOWED THAT NARAYAN AND THE LOOSE MOVEMENT HE LEADS CAN COUNT ON VERY SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT AMONGST: (A) MIDDLE CLASS STUDENTS, TRADERS AND PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE IN BOTH THE STATE CAPITAL PATNA AS WELL AS DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS; (B) THE PARTY CADRES AND ESPECIALLY STUDENT FRONTS OF THE VIABLE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION PARTIES IN BIHAR, I.E., THE JAN SANGH, AND THE SOCIALIST PARTY ESPECIALLY; (C) THE LABOR FRONTS OF THESE TWO PARTIES AS WELL AS THE CITU--LABOR FRONT OF THE COOPERATING CPI(M); AND (D) SCATTERED VILLAGE GROUPS, ORGANIZED BY RESIDENT SARVODAYA MOVEMENT WORKERS (WHO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WERE ACTIVE IN SIT-INS ON THE TRAIN TRACKS).

3. SUCCESSFUL ALSO IN THE SENSE THAT AFTER THE FIRST DAY, THE PROTESTERS EFFECTIVELY TIED UP BOTH THE RAILWAY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS IN THE STATE. THIS VARIED FROM DISTRICT TO DISTRICT AND A DAY TO DAY BUT IN GENERAL THESE IMPORTANT LINKS WERE UNABLE TO FUNCTION AND THIS WAS A PRIMARY GOAL.

4. ALTHOUGH WE ARE PREPARED TO TAKE NARAYAN'S NON-VIOLENT PROTESTATIONS AT FACE VALUE, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES WANTED AT LEAST LIMITED VIOLENCE, GOT IT AND WILL TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON THE 13 DEATHS UNCOUNTED INJURIES AND THE MORE THAN 2500 ARRESTS. STUDENT REACTIONS TO THE POLICE FIRING WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF THREE STUDENTS WILL BE IMPORTANT TO WATCH IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

5. ONE AREA WHERE THE MOVEMENT GOT VIRTUALLY NO POPULAR SUPPORT WAS IN THE TRIBAL BELT OF CHHOTA NAGPUR. THIS APPEARS TO CONFIRM OUR THESIS (CALCUTTA 2112) THAT THE BIHARI TRIBALS ARE NOT ASSERTING THEMSELVES, AT LEAST THROUGH AGITATIONAL POLITICS, DESPITE THE MANY PROBLEMS OF THEIR REGION.

6. SO WHAT AND WHAT NEXT? WHAT OCCURED OCT. 3-6 WAS CONSIDERABLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORE SUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF DISRUPTION AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION THAN THE 1942 QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT WHICH J.P. ALSO LED AND TO WHICH HE REPEATEDLY DRAWS ANALOGIES. ONLY THE PEOPLE SITTING IN DELHI ARE APPARENTLY HARDER NUTS TO CRACK THAN THEIR LONDON-BASED PREDECESSORS. WE NOW EXPECT A MAJOR PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN BY NARAYAN AS WELL AS ATTEMPTS TO CAUSE SIMILAR MOVEMENTS TO SPREAD IN THE HINDI HEARTLAND WHERE THEY SEEMTO HAVE APPEAL, I.E., UTTAR PRADESH AND MADHYA PRADESH AS WELL AS

BIHAR.

7. IT IS ALSO NOT CLEAR WHAT THE EFFECT WILL BE ON THE STATE CONGRESS PARTY. THERE HAVE NOT YET BEEN PUBLIC SIGNS OF IMPORTANT DISAFFECTION WITHIN THE PARTY. THIS IS SURPRISING, GIVEN THE DEEPLY FACTIONALIZED NATURE OF THE PARTY IN THE STATE, AND THE PULL OF THE NARAYAN MOVEMENT, BUT IT IS ALSO A REFLECTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEGREE OF CONTROL. UNTIL SHE SHOWS SOME SIGNS OF BEING PREPARED TO DISCUSS ACCOMMODATION, THEY PROBABLY WILL MAKE NO MOVE.

8. A NOTE ON SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS: ACCORDING TO THE PRESS THERE WERE OVER 100,000 ARMED SECURITY PERSONNEL (BORDER SECURITY FORCE, CENTRAL ARMED POLICE) BROUGHT INTO THE STATE FROM U.P., ORISSA AND ASSAM. THIS APPARENTLY IS IN ADDITION TO THE 41,000 STATE POLICE PLUS THOSE BSF AND CAP PERSONNEL ALREADY IN THE STATE. THE ARMY WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN PUT ON ALERT.
PICKERING UNQUOTE SCHNEIDER UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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